­­

Text

Description automatically generated

**Contact:** Christy Riddle **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Phone:** (662) 846-4336

**Email:** criddle@deltastate.edu

**DSU marks its 99th anniversary with celebration on campus**

**CLEVELAND, Miss. —** Delta State University commemorated its 99th anniversary Monday with a celebration held on campus at the Lena Roberts Sillers Chapel. Campus leaders spoke to the gathered students, alumni, faculty and staff that joined together to mark this momentous occasion, reflecting on the storied history of the institution and the mandate of the university to endure for future generations.

Athletic Director Mike Kinnison welcomed the guests and spoke about his lengthy involvement with DSU, first as a student athlete, then as a math professor, coach and on into his current position. He recalled the many people who influenced him as a student and as an employee of the university, saying, “My experience at Delta State was one where I was surrounded by great people of influence. They cared about me and helped me navigate the obstacles that all college students encounter. As important is the way that the community embraces Delta State. I have a lot of people to thank and a lot of people that I am grateful to.”

Vicki Carter, a senior from Horn Lake in the Entertainment Industry Studies department then delivered stirring renditions of “Rise Up,” by Andra Day and “You Will Believe,” by Mariah Carey. Following Carter’s performance, Delta State President Dr. Daniel J. Ennis spoke, thanking Carter and imploring her to “Remember us when you are famous!”

Ennis then spoke about how, since his arrival on campus in June 2023, he has often invoked Delta State’s history whenever making public remarks. He spoke of the contradictions and tensions between revering the past and preparing for the future, saying, “No institution in America is more responsible for the future, and more tied to the past, than a university. Our nation, our state, our community…they expect Delta State to help create tomorrow.”

Ennis then, with assistance from Dr. Michelle Roberts and DSU First Lady Jen Ennis unveiled the theme for the upcoming year saying, “Let us fix our gaze on the next century at Delta State University. The theme for Delta State’s Centennial will be ‘ForEverGreen,’ honoring our history, cultivating new growth, and enriching the future.”

He closed by saying, “Expect the Centennial Celebration to show respect for what came before. But if all we do is throw ourselves a birthday party, we fail our forebearers who built this campus yesterday, and we fail the students who will come to this campus tomorrow. The Centennial Celebration is the reason to gather, but the Centennial Campaign – the battle for the next century of Delta State University – that is the best gift we can give this precious place.”

Dr. Suzette Matthews, Vice President for University Advancement then took to the podium to provide details on the $100 million Centennial Capital Campaign, saying, “This campaign is not just about reaching a financial goal. It’s about ensuring that Delta State continues to offer a world-class education, innovative research and opportunities that change lives. It’s about investing in our campus, creating cutting-edge programs, and ensuring that every student who walks through our doors is prepared to thrive in an ever-changing world.”

The campaign is designed to enhance scholarships, invest in facilities, strengthen academic programs, and cultivate partnerships and opportunities that will enrich the state of Mississippi and beyond. Matthews said, “Thank you all for your dedication, your generosity, and your unwavering belief in what we can accomplish together. Let’s make history and build a future that will honor the legacy of Delta State and secure its place as a leader in education for the next 100 years.”

DSU First Lady Jennifer Ennis is one of the co-chairs of the Centennial Celebration and helped plan the 99th anniversary event. She said, “I was honored to be a part of the planning for DSU's 99th Anniversary Celebration. I want to commend Michelle Roberts and all of the team from the President's office as well as Christy Riddle and Holly Ray in the Communication Department, who all demonstrated wonderful collaboration and team work to make this event a success. They worked tirelessly together to create the theme and branding for the Centennial Celebration, which was revealed at this event today. I look forward to the coming year as we celebrate 100 years of DSU and its bright future that will undoubtedly be ‘ForEverGreen!’”

For information on how to become involved in the Centennial Campaign, visit <https://deltastategiving.org/>.

Cutline: DSU President Dr. Daniel J. Ennis speaks to students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends from the Cleveland community to mark the occasion of DSU’s 99th anniversary.

###

**About Delta State University:**Delta State University is a four-year public institution whose nearly 2,700 students come from most U.S. states and more than 45 countries. Acknowledging its beginning as a teacher’s college, the University sustains excellence in teacher education while continuing to expand offerings in traditional as well as unique fields of study. Programs such as those available through the Delta Music Institute, the Commercial Aviation Department, and the Center for Interdisciplinary Geospatial Information highlight the University’s commitment to meeting the evolving needs of the students it serves with world-leading, industry-acclaimed programs. Situated in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, Delta State offers top-notch academic programs in business, arts, sciences, nursing, education, and more. DSU Athletics has won 14 national championships, 70 conference championships, and 37 regional titles.